

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

SECTION 1915(b) PROGRAM

Project Name: Mississippi Non-Emergency Transportation Program
Originally Approved: April 11, 2003
Most Recently Renewed: April 11, 2003
Current Expiration Date: April 10, 2005

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The State of Mississippi submitted a proposal under Section 1915(b) of the Social Security Act to provide non-emergency transportation to the State's Medicaid beneficiaries. The waiver provides for an inhouse broker model to oversee group and individual transportation providers in 32 service regions. NET Coordinators in the regional offices for the Division of Medicaid arrange non-emergency transportation services for eligible beneficiaries, choosing the most appropriate and cost-effective means of transportation available.

With this program, the State has implemented two changes intended to reduce program costs and prevent unnecessary and inappropriate utilization, while assuring adequate access to necessary services:

- Utilization of public paratransit services in two urban areas
- Use of application forms to obtain services

HEALTH CARE DELIVERY:

Mississippi has been operating under an inhouse broker model, claiming the administrative match for a number of years. Under the waiver, beneficiaries requiring services call NET Coordinators, employed by Mississippi Division of Medicaid, 72 hours in advance of an appointment. NET Coordinators assess beneficiary needs and arrange transportation with the most appropriate and cost-effective provider within a network of individual (volunteer) and group providers. Primary and secondary group providers were selected using a competitive process and assigned to each of the 32 NET service regions. Successful bidders were required to demonstrate at least twelve months of experience providing local and long distance transportation services. Primary group providers are responsible for providing any transportation not provided by individual NET providers. If, for some reason, the primary group provider is unable to fulfill a trip request, the secondary group provider will receive the assignment.

The program will utilize public paratransit services for dialysis patients and the disabled in the two largest urban areas of the state, Hattiesburg and Jacksonville. Services will be provided through two public transit systems and additional vehicles are scheduled to be added to their fleets by June 2003.

In Year Two of the waiver, Medicaid beneficiaries will be required to complete an application to obtain services. The forms will help assure that only qualified beneficiaries receive services and that the most cost-effective means of transportation is provided, given the recipient's medical needs. Beneficiaries who previously obtained non-emergency

transportation, as well as new requestors, will receive a letter by mail informing them of this new process. The letter will be followed by the application and, after two months, a reminder letter. Local NET Coordinators will be available to address beneficiary questions and assist in completing the application.

The program is monitored by State NET staff who conduct annual onsite compliance and financial audits of group providers. An 800 hotline is maintained to handle inquiries, complaints, and other problems. Other monitoring activities include biannual beneficiary satisfaction surveys and special and unannounced onsite reviews. Providers must submit a corrective action plan for any substantiated complaints.

Areas addressed in monitoring activities include pick-up times, wait times, overall rider satisfaction, vehicle maintenance, tags, and inspection as well as driver licensing, training, and background checks. Financial reviews include examination of financial records, documentation of services provided, cross checks of appointments with medical providers and trip tickets, etc.

The program is expected to impact 27,000-29,000 Medicaid beneficiaries. QMBs and SLMBs are the only excluded populations.

BENEFIT PACKAGE:

Non-emergency transportation only.

EXCLUDED SERVICES:

Not Applicable

LOCK-IN PROVISION:

Not applicable

ENROLLMENT BROKER:

Not applicable

COST EFFECTIVENESS/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Payment for Primary Providers was determined through the request for proposal (RFP) process. The cost of a transport (one-way trip) represents a fixed, blended rate; that is, all transports for a region's winning bidder during the contract period are paid at the same rate, regardless of distance traveled, time, and vehicle type. Claims are submitted to the State for processing and payment.

The State projected that, without the waiver, non-emergency transportation costs for the two-year waiver period would have been \$53,554,247; with-waiver costs are expected to be \$52,683,662, resulting in a savings of \$870,585 over the waiver period.